

around the world who look to the United States for inspiration and support in their own democratic struggles.

We see that in places like Cuba today. Looking around the globe, we see China stripping away Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms at an alarming pace. Military dictators are cementing their illegitimate rule in places like Burma and Mali, eroding and eliminating the institutions of democracy, while Russia and Belarus have imprisoned political opponents without accountability.

At the same time, an unprecedented 80 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes, communities, and countries. We must look no farther than our own southern border to see the destruction, desperation, and displacement wrought by violence, climate change, and lack of economic opportunity.

All of these developments negatively impact American national security interests. Our Secretary of State and, indeed, our country need senior human rights leadership of the caliber of Ms. Zeya.

The fact that the nomination of Ms. Zeya—a nominee so superbly qualified and whose leadership is so essential to rebuilding the State Department—has languished for 82 days is a travesty. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm her to the position of Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, and I hope my Republican colleagues will stop blocking qualified and critical nominees to the Nation's foreign policy and national security mission from moving forward.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

CUBA

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the new day of freedom dawning in Cuba and the brave Cubans marching for freedom across the island. For decades, the Cuban people have suffered atrocities, oppression, and misery at the hands of the communist Castro regime.

I have repeatedly told the story of Sirley Ávila León, a Cuban woman who was attacked by Cuban security forces in 2015. They cut off her hand and stuck her arm in the mud to make sure it got infected. Her crime? She complained that the regime was going to shut down a school in her neighborhood.

I have spoken to brave leaders like José Daniel Ferrer and the courageous members of his Patriotic Union of Cuba who are fighting every day to defend human rights, freedom, and the democratic movement in Cuba. Activists like José Daniel Ferrer and the artists of the San Isidro Movement are the future of Cuba, not the ruthless communist regime.

Today, the people of Cuba are saying: Enough. Across Cuba, people are marching in the streets to protest against communist rule and demand the freedom, liberty, and basic human

rights that have been stolen from them for decades by the brutally oppressive Cuban regime. Their demands are simple: libertad.

What we are seeing in Cuba should send a clear message to the world. Communism is a failed ideology that does nothing but lead to suffering and oppression. Communism doesn't work. Socialism doesn't work.

The people of Cuba are crying out for freedom. They are denouncing the oppressive communist rule that has brought ruin to their nation for more than 60 years. The message from the Cuban people to Diaz-Canel and Raul Castro has never been more clear: Your time is up. And the regime is terrified of the Cuban people. They are attacking peaceful protesters in an effort to silence them. Right now, José Daniel Ferrer, members of his family, and other leaders from his group are reportedly missing, likely kidnapped by the regime.

This disgusting assault on the people of Cuba cannot go unchecked. We cannot ignore this historic moment in the fight for freedom. We understand the value and importance of freedom in our everyday lives, and it is our duty to support and stand up for those who are oppressed by dictators and denied the right the live freely.

Today, I stand proudly with the heroic freedom fighters across Cuba who have taken to the streets, determined to regain their freedom and put an end to the Castro dictatorship.

Now, the Biden administration must lead the freedom-loving nations of the world in loud and unequivocal denouncement of the brutal communist Castro regime and in support of the liberty, democracy, and human rights the Cuban people call for and rightfully deserve.

We must be clear. For decades, Cuba has been the root of instability in Latin America and represented a terrible threat to the national security of the United States. The Castro regime harbors terrorist groups; has gotten rid of free and fair elections; threatens and arbitrarily arrests critics, journalists, and political activists; and props up other ruthless dictators, like Maduro in Venezuela and Ortega in Nicaragua.

Today, the American people must join freedom-loving Cubans in saying that the oppression ends now. We cannot lift sanctions or restore diplomatic relations with the Cuban dictatorship. We should not offer another lifeline to this brutal communist dictatorship.

I urge the Biden administration to impose further sanctions on the tyrannical Cuban regime. We cannot let up. There must be consequences for this heinous oppression and attacks on peaceful protesters.

To the people of Cuba: You are not alone. I stand with you in this fight. Florida stands with you in this fight. The United States of America stands with you in this fight.

The freedom of Cuba is closer than ever, and we are not going to stop until

we see a new day of freedom, democracy, and "Patria y Vida" in Cuba.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in Spanish.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(English translation of statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

To the people of Cuba: You are not alone. I stand with you in this fight. Florida stands with you in this fight. The United States of America stands with you in this fight.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 67, Uzra Zeya, of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights).

Charles E. Schumer, Jon Ossoff, Margaret Wood Hassan, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Ron Wyden, Robert Menendez, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jacky Rosen, Cory A. Booker, Tammy Duckworth, John Hickenlooper, Jon Tester, Edward J. Markey, Tammy Baldwin, Brian Schatz, Gary C. Peters, Tina Smith.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Uzra Zeya, of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary of State, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 71, nays 23, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 253 Ex.]

YEAS—71

Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Kaine
Bennet	Crapo	Kelly
Blumenthal	Duckworth	King
Blunt	Durbin	Klobuchar
Brown	Feinstein	Leahy
Burr	Fischer	Lujan
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Manchin
Capito	Graham	Markey
Cardin	Grassley	McConnell
Carper	Hassan	Menendez
Casey	Heinrich	Merkley
Collins	Hickenlooper	Moran
Coons	Hirono	Murphy
Cornyn	Hyde-Smith	Murray

Ossoff	Sasse	Toomey
Padilla	Schatz	Van Hollen
Peters	Schumer	Warner
Portman	Scott (SC)	Warnock
Reed	Shaheen	Warren
Risch	Sinema	Whitehouse
Romney	Smith	Wicker
Rosen	Stabenow	Wyden
Rounds	Tester	Young
Sanders	Thune	

NAYS—23

Barrasso	Hagerty	Marshall
Blackburn	Hawley	Paul
Boozman	Hoeben	Rubio
Cotton	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Kennedy	Shelby
Cruz	Lankford	Sullivan
Daines	Lee	Tuberville
Ernst	Lummis	

NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Cassidy	Murkowski
Braun	Inhofe	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 71, the nays are 23.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Ohio.

REMEMBERING ELSIE STEWARD YOUNG

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, last week, Ohio and our Nation lost a champion for civil rights, Miss Elsie Steward Young of Highland County, a conservative, rural county in Southwest Ohio.

Miss Elsie, as everyone called her, had just celebrated her 105th birthday. She is a legend in Southwest Ohio. Her courage, her leadership made a difference for children not only in her community but all over the country.

In 1954, after the Supreme Court issued its landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and ordered an end to segregation in American schools, the two all-White primary schools in Hillsboro—again, a small town, Highland County, southwest of Columbus—refused to integrate. The district continued to send Black students to a single all-Black school which was woefully underfunded.

I remember the stories my mother would tell me of growing up in Mansfield, GA. She said she knew and she told me—when busing became such a controversy in the 1960s and 1970s, she told me that she knew all about busing.

In the South, when she grew up in the twenties and thirties, they would bus Black students past the newer, better kept White schools to the segregated Black schools that were falling apart. No criticism of “forced busing” in those days.

That was essentially what was going on in Hillsboro, OH, and Elsie Steward Young wouldn’t stand for it.

She and a group of mothers—this is in the 1950s—took matters into their own hands. They became the Marching Mothers of Hillsboro. Every single day for two long years, they marched for miles to the town’s all-White primary school; every day they were sent home.

They carried on. Eventually, the community and the State and the country noticed. They joined with the NAACP to file a lawsuit against the Hillsboro board of education. It made it all the way to the Supreme Court, and they won.

Because of Miss Elsie and her fellow mothers’ advocacy, the Court ordered the schools to integrate and paved the way for integration in other northern cities.

Her activism showed us why ordinary students and ordinary citizens—what they can achieve when they join together to fight for justice.

It is a reminder of how far we have come, how much work we have to do to achieve justice and opportunity for all children in our country.

Three years ago, Elsie Steward Young was inducted into the Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame. That fall, we honored the Marching Mothers of Hillsboro and the children—of course, now adults—who marched. We honored them with our office’s Canary Award at our annual Ohio Women’s Conference.

Then-Senator KAMALA HARRIS, now the Vice President, was supposed to speak. We were going to present Miss Elsie with the award. She was already past 100 at that point. We both had to stay in Washington at the last minute because of Supreme Court votes.

So many Ohioans at that conference told me later that, frankly, I am not sure that the Vice President—the future Vice President and I were missed that much, not with Miss Elsie there. She not only filled the void, she provided so much energy with her forceful, inspiring words; and during that conference she was 102.

Throughout the conference, people lined up to get pictures with her. When the video played depicting the bravery and determination of the marchers and when Miss Elsie spoke accepting the award, of course, there was hardly a dry eye in the audience.

She talked about how she and other mothers only did what any mother would do for her children.

So many Ohioans will miss Miss Elsie Steward Young. Our thoughts are with her three surviving daughters, her two surviving sons, and, get this, her 36 grandchildren.

We know her legacy lives on through her success, through her victories, through her fight for justice, through her families, through the future generations of young people whom she inspired to stand against justice.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Miss Elsie Steward Young, Ohioan mother, determined champion for civil rights.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. President, for the first time in decades, workers are beginning to gain some power in our economy.

Because of President Biden’s leadership, because of the American Rescue Plan, America’s economy is roaring back. We have had record job creation. We gained more than 3 million jobs since this President took office, more jobs created in the first 5 months of any Presidency in modern history.

It is not only the jobs numbers—those are important—but those, of course, don’t tell the full story. It is the quality of those jobs.

We are starting to see signs of increased bargaining power for American workers: power to negotiate higher pay, solid working conditions, better benefits, more control over their schedules, opportunities for career advancement, all the things that turn into good, stable, middle-class careers.

I want to see employers competing for workers. That is a good thing. It is how you get rising wages, which get spent in the community and then create growth for everyone, whether in Sante Fe or Columbus.

For decades, corporations have had all the power in our economy. It is going to take a lot of work to undo those decades of bad trade and tax policy that gave corporations every single day the upper hand.

We are starting to see glimmers of progress. Wages are starting to go up. Wages have been rising all year. They are surging for workers who have been paid too little for decades, working tough jobs in restaurants and hotels and other service jobs.

Last week, the Washington Post declared “Welcome to the year of wage hikes.” They reported, in the past 3 months, rank-and-file employees have seen some of the fastest wage growth in 40 years. Think about that, the fastest wage growth since Ronald Reagan said it was morning in America.

It is what should happen—what happens when you invest in people who make this country work, not the CEOs, not multinational corporations, not money that never really trickles down.

We invested in America’s greatest asset, our workers. Putting money directly in people’s pockets, putting kids back in school, putting workers back in jobs, that is starting to unleash the true potential of our economy.

We don’t stop here. On Friday, President Biden issued a sweeping Executive order to increase competition in the economy. It is one more way we start to tilt the job market toward workers. Capitalism without competition is just exploitation.

It is just common sense, when you have a tiny number of corporations, a shrinking number of corporations that get bigger and bigger, that control entire industries and huge portions of the economy, it drives up prices, and it drives down wages.

Research shows that industry consolidation decreases worker pay by as much as 17 percent. Companies force workers to sign noncompete agreements as a condition of getting a job, even in jobs like fast food and construction. They tuck them into the fine print of job contracts, making it harder for workers to switch to better paying options.

Sometimes they are not even enforceable, but employers put them in there anyway because it scares workers away from taking another job.

We are putting a stop to this. No company should be allowed to tell you you can’t take a job offering higher pay. President Biden is cracking down